MINUTES OF THE
EDUCATION INTERIM COMMITTEE
Wednesday, June 19, 2013 – 9:00 a.m. – Room 30 House Building

Members Present:
Sen. Stuart C. Reid, Senate Chair
Rep. Francis D. Gibson, House Chair
Sen. Patricia W. Jones
Sen. Mark B. Madsen
Sen. Howard A. Stephenson
Sen. Jerry W. Stevenson
Sen. Stephen H. Urquhart
Rep. Rich Cunningham
Rep. Rebecca P. Edwards
Rep. Steve Eliason
Rep. Bradley G. Last
Rep. David E. Lifferth
Rep. Daniel McCay
Rep. Carol Spackman Moss
Rep. Jim Nielson
Rep. Val L. Peterson

Rep. Marie H. Poulson
Rep. V. Lowry Snow
Rep. Keven J. Stratton

Members Absent:
Rep. Patrice M. Arent
Rep. Gregory H. Hughes
Rep. Dean Sanpei

Staff Present:
Ms. Allison M. Nicholson, Policy Analyst
Ms. Constance C. Steffen, Policy Analyst
Ms. Angela Oakes Stallings, Associate General
 Counsel
Ms. Debra Hale, Legislative Secretary

Note: A list of others present, a copy of related materials, and an audio recording of the meeting can be found at www.le.utah.gov.

1. Committee Business

Chair Reid called the meeting to order at 9:03 a.m. Rep. Arent was excused from the meeting.

MOTION: Sen. Jones moved to approve the minutes of the May 15, 2013, meeting. The motion passed unanimously. Sen. Madsen, Rep. Gibson, Rep. Nielson, and Rep. Stratton were absent for the vote.

2. Front-line Teachers

Rep. Nielson discussed the content and purpose of his 2014 General Session draft legislation "Front-line Teachers Data Program" (2014FL-0026/002), which was included in the mailing packet. He said that the bill establishes reporting requirements for school districts, charter schools, and the Utah State Board of Education (USBE) on the allocation of resources for front-line teachers, which the bill defines as licensed teachers who have an assignment to teach kindergarten, elementary, secondary, or special education courses, and does not include prekindergarten teachers, school-based specialists, or classroom aides.

Dr. Martell Menlove, State Superintendent, stated that relevant information is in the Superintendent's Annual Report and that it is useful but perhaps not as easily available as some would like. He discussed, in general, the expense of collecting data and reviewed certain administrative costs for FY 2012. He cautioned that there are 1,000 different schools with various needs, and a one-size-fits-all approach may not work well for each school.

Mr. Kory Holdaway, Director, Government Relations, Utah Education Association, discussed increased administrative duties and responsibilities related to new requirements for evaluating teachers. He cautioned the committee on the interpretation of front-line teacher data and discussed reasons why different districts may have different costs. He questioned the value of collecting data compared to the cost of collecting it.

Mr. Peter Cannon, member, Board of Education, Davis School District, speaking for himself, stated that he believes the bill provides only a narrow focus on one type of instruction. He spoke of the importance of a variety of instructional services and pointed out how educational paraprofessionals, such as teachers' aides and tutors, create diversified teaching, enabling the licensed teacher to focus on struggling students.

Mr. Robert Comstock, educator, Jordan School District, described the importance of quality education administrators and the value of professional development and district specialists who, in part, provide professional development. He stated that all employees of schools and districts are important factors in teaching students.

Ms. Lynda Simmons, former educator and former principal, Hartvigsen School, Granite School District, expressed her belief that great leaders make great schools, and that a principal sets the tone of the school. She said that special education students require much more funding and encouraged increased funding.

3.   School Grading

President Wayne L. Niederhauser reviewed a visual presentation which provided an overview of school grading in the state. He discussed the history of school grading in Utah, which was originally modeled on Florida's system, and different growth models for measuring student growth.

Dr. Menlove explained the USBE's Utah Comprehensive Accountability System, and stated that the USBE plans to issue school grades according to 2013 General Session S.B. 271, "School Grading Amendments," in the required time frame. He discussed some concerns with the grading system as it stands now.

Mr. Holdaway addressed concerns related to school grading and also addressed the discussion regarding a bell-shaped curve distribution of school grades across the state.

Ms. Cammie Nebeker, member of the public, questioned how growth is calculated and how non-proficient students are counted.

4.   Capabilities of the Utah Data Alliance

Dr. Judy Park, Associate Superintendent, Utah State Office of Education, and member, Executive Board, Utah Data Alliance (UDA), addressed a visual presentation explaining how the UDA was created and funded by a federal grant. She stated that the UDA is not required to report any of the data to the federal government based on the grant. She clarified that now that the system has been created, selected researchers are able to use the data for analyses.

Dr. John Brandt, Project Director and Grant Manager, Utah Data Alliance, and Information Technology Director, Computer Services, Utah State Office of Education, continued with the UDA visual presentation regarding the use, research, and analyses of UDA data. He discussed data sources in the Statewide Longitudinal Data System and potential types of research questions that can be answered with the data. He reviewed the data and auditing procedures that members of the UDA used to ensure that the data are high quality.

Ms. Erika Orians, Research Associate, Utah Data Alliance, and Research Coordinator, Utah Education Policy Center, continued with the UDA visual presentation, displaying dynamic dashboards, which allow the user to select various details of the data.

5. **Other Items/Adjourn**

MOTION: Sen. Madsen moved to adjourn the meeting. The motion passed unanimously. Sen. Urquhart, Rep. Cunningham, Rep. Gibson, Rep. Lifferth, Rep. McCay, Rep. Nielson, and Rep. Poulson were absent for the vote. Chair Reid adjourned the meeting at 11:30 a.m.